

A Bird's Eye View



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Audubon Society of Omaha
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

How are Loess Hills Natural Areas

Being Managed?

By Clem Klaphake

What are the Loess Hills? Many people have described them in a variety of ways. Cornelia Mutel in *Fragile Giants: A Natural History of the Loess Hills*, writes, "The history of the Loess Hills began when extraordinary deep blankets of silt were first deposited in this region. Much can be told of how the silt was lifted by wind and then shaped by water; of the gigantic mammals that wandered the region's valley and climbed its slopes; of the plant communities that migrated to and from the Hills, broad-leaved and needled trees from the north and east, grasses from the south and west. The Loess Hills' history is one of climate, inhabitants, and landscapes constantly responding to one another."

How do we manage or preserve these Hills today with the ever-expanding human populations' demands for acreage housing, 'fill' dirt, ATV trails, and suppression of fires? **Susanne Hickey, Loess Hills Protection Specialist with the Nature Conservancy (Iowa Chapter), will**

discuss these issues at the next Audubon Society of Omaha general meeting on Thursday, September 14th.

Susanne will address the need for managing the Loess Hills and what that entails. She will focus on the use of volunteers and her experiences working with college students—not easy work when the temperatures reach the 90's and you are clearing trees on a steep hillside.

Susanne graduated from the University of Nebraska-Omaha with a Masters Degree in Biology with an emphasis on fire ecology. In 1995 she and her husband started a biological consulting company called Eco-Centrics.

For an informative presentation, come hear Susanne Hickey at our meeting Thursday, September 14, 7:30 p.m. in the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street. A short business meeting will follow the program, concluding with coffee, cookies and conversation. Field guides for many nature-related topics, T-shirts and other items will be for sale before and after the program.

Glenn Pollock to Lead Field Trip to Iowa Prairie

By Jim Kovanda

Our first field trip of the season promises to also be one of our best. On Saturday, September 23, ASO will sponsor a trip to the Vincent Prairie, located in the Loess Hills near Council Bluffs. Prairie enthusiast Glenn Pollock will lead us through the 31-acre site.

We will meet Glenn at 8:00 A.M. at the HyVee Store parking lot in the Mall of the Bluffs. To reach our meeting place, take I-80 east to the Madison Avenue exit (Council Bluffs), turn left and go two blocks. HyVee is on the right (north) side of Madison.

The tour is scheduled to end at noon. You may want to bring sunscreen, insect repellent and a cold drink.

Our focus will be on identifying the flora of the prairie, but you may also want to bring your binoculars to help identify the fauna as well.

This trip is open to the public; your friends are welcome to join us.

Looking forward to some more exciting field trips in October, please reserve Sunday the 15th (hawks) and Saturday the 21st for sparrows.



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Scholarly Notes

by Eric Scholar



Focus for the Future

In looking to the future, I have several ideas to express regarding the areas I believe ASO should focus on in the next couple of years.

These areas are membership and volunteerism, cooperation with other conservation groups, and improved management of our natural areas.

Membership

An area of the most importance where progress is needed is membership. Over the years, ASO has had many valued members supporting, running and taking part in its activities.

However, the one group of individuals currently under-represented for the most part are those in the 18-40 year old age group.

This group is our future. We need to develop new strategies for drawing them into our membership and onto the board of directors. It is important that an organization continuously have new input and new ideas from all ages.

One approach might be to advertise our activities in the local colleges and universities. Building links between ASO, high school teachers, and college professors could be a worthwhile endeavor.

Perhaps ASO could sponsor a scholarship for students in our local colleges. I would be happy to hear of any other ideas that could attract new members and volunteers.

Linking With Other Conservation Groups

I would like to see improved cooperation between ASO and other con

servation groups in our area.

Several organizations share our interests in enjoying nature and conserving it. We have cooperated with some of these groups in the past, for example, the Sierra Club on Earth Day and other events, but this cooperation could be expanded. Perhaps ASO can join with other groups to bring in a speaker to serve the common interests of all the groups. I am certain there are also other ways we can work together.

Cooperation would help all of the groups with similar goals accomplish those things we share in common, as well as possibly increase membership.

Needs at Natural Areas

Thirdly, we need to focus on increased use of Heron Haven and a strengthening of management at all of ASO's natural areas.

To properly conduct business, a regular schedule of volunteers is needed at the Rookery, Heron Haven.

I think we need to consider hiring a part time person to oversee and manage Heron Haven.

Additional use could be made of our building

Dragonfly

Field Trip Finds

Are Plentiful

By Babs and Loren Padelford

Nine participants of the ASO dragonfly field trip of July 15 tallied seven species of dragonflies and four damselfly species on the first part of the trip to Schramm State Park.

The highlight there was watching two Prince Baskettails that were patrolling the fish ponds. Other species seen were Vivid Dancer, Blue-fronted Dancer, Familiar Bluet, Eastern Forktail, Twelve-spotted Skimmer, Eastern Amberwing, Eastern Pond Hawk, Common Whitetail, Widow Skimmer and Black Saddlebags.

Lunch and afternoon were spent at Louisville Lakes State Park where the highlight was watching at least two pairs of showy orange and red Halloween Pennants flying in tandem and laying eggs in a pond.

An additional damselfly species (Azure Bluet) and four additional dragonfly species (Common Green Darner, Blue Dasher, Halloween Pennant, and Red Saddlebags) were added at Louisville.

September

Events

6 (Wed) Board Meeting

14 (Thurs) General Meeting

18 (Mon) Nature Study

Oct 2 - Conserv/Legisl Meeting

Oct 21-22 Bird Seed Sale pick-up dates

and the natural area at Heron Haven. These could include family oriented field trips and day programs for senior citizens, as well as more fundraising activities. Many possibilities exist.

More volunteers are needed at Jensen Prairie. Currently most of the work is being done by Glenn Pollock, who could use help in caring for this property. Willing workers would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to working with all of you to make some of these ideas become reality.



Environmentalist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to Speak in Omaha October 12

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will take the stage at UNO's ABC Breakfast Speaker Series, 7:00 a.m. October 12, at Holiday Inn Central, 72nd & Grover, following a breakfast buffet.

Kennedy's reputation as a resolute defender of the environment stems from his successful actions prosecuting governments and companies for polluting the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, winning settlements for Hudson Riverkeeper, arguing cases to expand citizen access to the shoreline, and suing sewage treatment plants to force compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Now serving as senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, he led the

Nature Study to Open Year With Look at Raptors

Wall Street Journal, *Washington Post* and By Nelli Falzgraf other publications.

The April 26, 1999, issue of *Newsweek* published an article by Kennedy on the perils of hog farming, factory-raised poultry, and the "political contributions by agricultural barons that allow them to evade laws that prohibit other Americans from polluting waterways."

Among his published books is *The Riverkeepers* (1997), which he coauthored with John Cronin. He has led expeditions in America, including descents on three little-known rivers in Peru, Columbia and Venezuela. He is also a master falconer.

As summer's long days give way to fall, productivity winds down and migratory birds journey to climes still abundant with berries and 'bugs.'

The annual Hawk Watch at Hitchcock Nature Center starts this month.

Professor Clem Klaphake will lead us toward raptor migration with slides and perhaps a video to help us appreciate these top predators, and sharpen our identification skills.

Please bring information to share, or drop by to enjoy a study and discussion of raptors on Monday, September 18, at 7:00

fight to protect New York City's water supply and turned back the anti-environmental legislation during the 104th Congress.

Kennedy's articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*,

To purchase a ticket, p.m. at the Rookery, contact Rita 11809 Old Maple Road, Shaughnessy, 554-2006, Questions? Please call e-mail Nelli at 292-9687. abc@unomaha.edu, or send \$10 to her at UNO, Sparrow study will be Office of University featured at our Relations, 202 Eppley Wednesday, October 18, Administration Building, session. Omaha NE 68182-0315.

Omaha Raptor Team - A Committee of ASO

By Alison O'Connor

Summer has certainly been a busy season for the Omaha Raptor Team. We've conducted programs for the summer reading groups and public appearances for numerous functions, such as Cause for Paws at Omaha's Humane Society July 22. Pictured here at our booth is Ann Frame and Melody, our female American Kestrel.

The day brought over 5,000 visitors and their pets, not only to raise funds but also to raise animal awareness. It was a great opportunity to meet people and spread the word about our Team and Heron Haven.

Earlier this year, we featured in the newsletter a "raptor a month," which would then appear at the meetings for up close and personal introductions.

We will continue with that monthly program. We will even have two additional birds should all go well! We look forward to seeing you all soon.



Accommodations in and around Bassett:

Hotels and Motels

Bassett Lodge (retreat hdqtrs) - 5 blocks no of Hwy 20/183 intersection on Hwy 7; 205 Clark St, Box 366, Bassett 68714, 402-684-3417. Single/double rooms. The Range Cafe connected to the Lodge is the only restaurant serving full breakfast as well as dinner and supper.

Ranchland Motel, Intersection of Hwys 20/183/7
HC 75 Box 74, Bassett 68714; 402-684-3340
Single/double rooms; rollaway beds
Super 8 Motel, 1025 E 4th St,

Sandhill Motel; 1 bl east of Hwy Ainsworth
20/183 intersection, Box 133
Bassett 68714, 402-584-3762; 402-387-0700; 800-800-8000
Single/double rooms. Comfort Inn 1124 E 4th St, Ainsworth
402-387-1050;
Remington Arms Motel, E Hwy 20,
Ainsworth 800-221-2222
402-387-2220; 800-248-3971

Campgrounds

Long Pine State Rec. Area, 10 mi W
of Bassett, Long Lake SRA 28 mi W & 20 mi S
of Bassett, no electricity
NW of Long Pine. No electricity. Atkinson Lake SRA, 30 mi E of
Bassett.
Keller Park, 3 mi W and 9 mi N of
Long Pine;
electricity.



Long Pine State Rec. Area, 10 mi W
of Bassett,

NW of Long Pine. No electricity.

Keller Park, 3 mi W and 9 mi N of
Long Pine;

electricity.



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Environmental/ Legislative Action By Lone Werthman



Rivers

Which river should we discuss first? In the early 40's, it was all about building dams; now it's been concluded that dams aren't the solution to our Bereuter (see addresses personal watercraft on page 8) would be in (JetSkis) on the 59 order. Closer to home, miles of the Missouri on the Missouri River, a between Yankton, rider by Senator Bond South Dakota, and (R-MO) has been added Ponca State Park, to the Senate FY 2001 Nebraska. The river in Energy and Water this area was classified

problems.

In Oregon and Washington a death sentence has been issued for salmon unless the four dams on the Lower Snake River are taken out. Snake River dams kill salmon by delaying the migration of the young to the sea and by blocking the migration of adults returning to spawn.

Conservation groups have asked the Clinton Administration to determine what is needed to restore self-sustaining runs of salmon by 2002 and then require the dam removals if the salmon populations have not rebounded by 2005.

Federal officials have said that removal of the dams would be the most effective way to save the salmon, but the Corps of Engineers said it would take 6 to 8 years—to 2013—to do the work—too late to save the salmon.

Along the Mississippi River, more than 200,000 acres of migratory bird habitat could be lost within the next ten years because of sedimentation, flood control projects, and barge wakes, all caused by dams.

A new report calls for more funding from Congress for flood plain land acquisition from willing sellers, habitat restoration on public lands and programs designed to combat polluted runoff.

H.R. 4013, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Act of 2000, has now been introduced. Restoration of the Upper Mississippi is one of National Audubon's priority campaigns.

A letter of support for H.R. 4013 to Congressmen Lee Terry and Doug

Development Appropriations Bill.

This rider would block Missouri River dam reforms. It would prevent the Corps of Engineers from spending money to revise the master manual of the Missouri River if they add a spring rise out of Gavins Point Dam as a management option.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has issued a draft biological opinion saying that a spring rise out of Gavins Point Dam would keep the pallid sturgeon, Interior Least Tern, and Piping Plover from going extinct on the Missouri.

Chad Smith of American Rivers said, "Senator Bond's rider would essentially exempt Missouri River dam operations from federal laws protecting endangered species." The Corps of Engineers analysis also shows that the spring rise/split navigation season alternative will not increase flood threats.

Senator Bond's rider will also eliminate the opportunity of the public to comment on the issue in a proper public forum.

Senators Dasche (D-SD) and Baucus (D-MT) plan to offer an amendment to strike this anti-Missouri River, anti-Endangered Species Act and anti-public process rider from the Bill when it comes to the Senate floor for debate September 5.

Please call Senator Kerrey, 391-3411, and Senator Hagel, 758-8981, both in Omaha, now. Ask them to vote to kill the Bond rider and vote for the Dasche and Baucus amendment.

The National Park Service has announced that it will no longer permit

as a national scenic and recreational river many, many years ago, but the National Park Service has been slow to undertake the task of management until management of the Niobrara Scenic River was also put on the agenda.

Now, however, banning the JetSkis has brought out complaints from a vocal minority. To support the National Park Service in its decision, environmentalists throughout the area are writing a short letter or postcard to the Service to lend support to the decision.

The free-flowing stretches of the Missouri in Southeast South Dakota are a beautiful and unique part of our heritage, home to the endangered Interior Least Tern, the threatened Piping Plover and our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. We need to urge the Park Service to preserve the ban on JetSkis in this area.

These are noisy, dirty, and disruptive of the tranquillity of the area. They also disrupt those who are boating, canoeing or swimming. JetSkiers have over 500 other miles in the River in which to ski.

Write to Supt. Paul Hedron, Missouri River Recreational River, P. O. Box 591, O'Neill, NE.

And then there is the Platte River again. Governor Johanns is now weighing a decision on Nebraska's continued participation in the Platte River Cooperative Agreement - the MOA between Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and the Federal Government.



PO Box 117 • 11700 SW 100 Street •
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Environmental/Legislation Action Continued from page 4

Should Nebraska walk away or continue to fight for water for the Central Platte and wildlife?

The Governor is said to be hearing from a dedicated vocal minority that "wildlife protection on the Platte isn't worth the cost and that Nebraska should walk away from the Cooperative Agreement."

We don't agree. The Cooperative Agreement provides a measure of security for

Notes from Nature

By Jerry Toll



Sharing the Missouri

The Missouri River reaches like a tendril through the Great Prairie toward ward the Canadian border. It is a river of transport. The raindrop that falls in Montana seeking to return to the sea, visits the Missouri briefly. On the way the

Beaver have not the power to stop this river but live on its shores nonetheless, taking the willow and sometimes the great cottonwoods. Pallid sturgeon and channel cat, though greatly diminished in numbers, can still

all existing uses—habitat for wildlife, municipal water for thousands who live in towns and cities along its course, and irrigation water for the economic health of communities in all three states.

Don't let Nebraska leave the Compact. What the vocal minority doesn't understand is that if we walk away from the compact, Nebraska will have to come up with the necessary water by itself for the endangered species.

Wyoming and Colorado will be off the hook to bring any of the needed flow of water to Nebraska. Colorado and Wyoming would love that.

Please add your voice to the hundreds of letters going to Governor Johanns. You will find his address on page 8 of this issue.

Our next Conservation/Legislative Action meeting will be held Monday, October 2, 7:30 p.m., at our Heron Haven Audubon Office. Join us!

Birdline



For an update on the sightings in the state, call 292- 5325.

Report your sightings after listening to the tape.

River removes a speck of the Rocky Mountains and carries it along.

Occasionally it transports a canoe with a visitor or two seeking to connect with those who came before in hide and willow.

Connecting through solitude or laughter, it does not matter to the river, she welcomes all. The visitors come to float on something more powerful than themselves, flotsam for a day. We, the visitors, leave behind the worries of our complicated lives with no purpose but to realize at the end of the day that there is no greater purpose than to be a part of the Whole.

A day on the river is uncomplicated. We need ask of ourselves only the most basic human needs, food, water, and companionship. We rest but our minds do not rest, for as we float we become acutely aware of the microcosm around us normally taken for granted. We feel the imperfect skin of the river, of riffle and upwelling, through our tiny craft.

The Missouri for all her power is quiet and benign. The sound of the steady stroke of the paddle breaks the stillness. The paddle at rest makes a plip-plop as river water runs off the blade. The soundless damselfly visits and departs just as quickly, leaving only its trace in our minds to be conjured when needed.

The Missouri River is life. Cottonwood down clothes the surface, hugging the riffle and wave. Swallows and Black Terns feast on insects emerging from the River and its backwaters.

be found in the depths of the river. Deer visit the bank for a drink, then return to the corn or cottonwood. Occasionally the canoeing visitor can see a buck seeking the opposite shore for reasons only the buck can tell.

The times of equinox are the best to visit the river. An early Spring morning when frost still hangs on limbs and ice floes no longer journey with us. The Bald Eagle and Cormorant huddle on the branch anticipating our path under their perch, flying as we approach. A Phoebe calls its name. The winter fog hangs heavy though the air is warming, creating ghosts of bare cottonwood.

After the first frosts of Fall, the green of the trees becomes the brown, red and yellow floating with you. The air is still warm but from the north, and the river is now much cooler than when it was last dipped in Summer. Like the coming Winter, the visitor dare not oppose the river and attempt to venture upstream. Better to accept the direction it takes you. We are not there to go from point A to point B. The truth is in the journey.

Though always present and sustaining, the Missouri River is taken for granted. We think of it only in passing as we cross the interstate bridge.

What's the River doing? It nurtures us. We draw its water, but too often we forget the relationship we share.



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Audubon at Work - September

By lone Werthman

Activism: Land Donation: Audubon working to provide memorable activists are always working, outdoor experiences for all to whether for our direct benefit or appreciate the wonders of our the public in general. This past week a visitor came to our Audubon Office wishing to thank my activist cohort Glenn Pollock. Through his expertise and knowledge of Iowa's

Projects at Heron Haven: ASO gratefully acknowledges the help several Boy Scout troops and

laws and opportunities in conservation, Glenn guided the family of Richard and Opal Talty to the Adams County, Iowa, Conservation Board, resulting in the family donating 103 acres of wildlife land adjoining Lake Icaria in Iowa to the Adams County Conservation Board for preservation.

Jensen Prairie: Prairie enthusiast Glenn Pollock and I this month successfully went through the political hoops to have the conservation easement on our 15-acre native tallgrass prairie approved by the Omaha Planning Board and City Council. It must now be registered with the Douglas County Assessment Office. The Conservation Easement is being held by Wachiska Audubon in Lincoln.

We have received almost all of the \$3,500 matching funds required for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife grant award earlier this year for restoration of Jensen Prairie.

We acknowledge with gratitude the \$2,700 in donations from Audubon members, leaving only \$800 yet to go. The grant specifies that the money be donated and not come from the general fund of ASO.

P. S. We gratefully acknowledge receiving all the needed matching funds to reach the \$1,000 goal for the Heron Haven grant.

Prairie Festival: Our neighboring Audubon chapter in Lincoln will hold its 20th annual Prairie Festival Sunday, September 17, at Audubon Nebraska's Spring Creek Prairie, Denton. All are invited to attend this fun and educational event with the 2000 theme, "A Prairie Wildlife Festival." Assorted hikes, music and speakers will be on the agenda for this 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. festival.

Gifts for Audubon: With the generous donation by ASO member Aline Hosman, final payment of National Audubon's 610-acre second sanctuary within the state—Spring Creek Prairie—has been made. Now it is on to other important steps in our capital campaign project, like building visitor/education centers on Spring Creek grounds and on Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary in Gibbon/Kearney on the Platte River.

Rowe Sanctuary, as we know, already has over 2,000 acres and is headquarters for the world phenomenon of Sandhill Cranes each March. Because National Audubon has a goal of building a culture of conservation through Audubon Centers throughout the U.S., we in Nebraska are

individual Scouts have given at Heron Haven this past year. Three-fourths of our woodland trail has been completed by a Scout troop under the direction of Paul Kardell, ASO board member. Boy Scout Aaron Murphy, working on his Eagle Scout project, has erected a picket fence around the butterfly garden.

The Ivy League Garden Club generously donated \$500 two years ago for seed and plants to establish the garden, did the planting, and now maintains the garden for our chapter. This year over 15 species of butterflies have been identified there.

North Woods Nature Education Center: ASO activists Betty Allen, Bechara Embaid, our new American citizen from Venezuela, and I traveled to Sandstone, Minnesota, in July to visit the Audubon North Woods Nature Education Center. There we became intrigued with their environmental education facility on 535 acres, far more than Heron Haven's 25 acres and Jensen Prairie's 15; but we are heading in the right direction. Some day we may be able to boast of more acres for a larger Omaha Center.

The North Woods Center is a dream. Director Mike Link gave us ideas as to what we can and shouldn't do, and how to incorporate many things in our small center. We concluded that the environment is not a subject, it is a place to put the process of learning and environmental discovery together.

We need to effect change because the schools do not have the environment in which kids can perform. Audubon is creating these opportunities to discover, explore and appreciate nature's wonders across the country. (And we will, too.)



Continued from page 6

Audubon at Work 2000,

Marjorie Vanderlippe Endows ASO

With deep appreciation and heartfelt gratitude we announce ASO's receipt of a bequest from the Marjorie Vanderlippe estate.

Ms. Vanderlippe, an ASO member for many years who was keenly interested in the outdoor life, passed away February 4, 1999, in Omaha.

Born April 22, 1920, Miss Vanderlippe was the daughter of Rev. R. R. Vanderlippe, Pastor of the Clifton Hills Presbyterian Church in Omaha.

Her early career took her to India and Japan with the American Red Cross Foreign Service. In later years, she was employed with the U.S. Employment Service in Omaha.

Ms. Vanderlippe believed in our Audubon goals. Her bequest certainly serves as a guiding light for us to achieve success. A bequest to Audubon is always a gift to those who will succeed us—a gift to secure our natural heritage. We thank her. May she rest in peace.

Bluebird Monitors

Need to Report

Now that the season has ended and the last fledgling is on its own, we all need to make certain to send in our reports to Bluebirds Across Nebraska. If you are not a member or if you prefer, you may contact Jim McLochlin at 9521 Burdette Court, 68134, 933-4638, with your data.

It is important to the success of our project that the statistics be reported. Please do not neglect this part of your participation in our efforts to bring back the Eastern Bluebird.



News from NAS

The West Central Region's nominee for the National Audubon Society Board of Directors is David L. Tylka of the St. Louis, Missouri, Audubon chapter. His name will now go on the National ballot.

Ione Werthman, our chapter's nominee, lost by two votes. Ione wishes to express her appreciation for the ASO Board's confidence in nominating her. She says if there were more than a total of 87 possible votes, she may have asked for a recount!



Toxic Waste

Disposal Site to Open

The City of Omaha plans to open a toxic waste facility sometime next year, where you will be able to drop off old and unused paint, pesticides, herbicides and other products not suitable for the garbage and landfill.

Meanwhile, for those products no longer needed, we are asked to save, not toss, them, as they are harmful and need special treatment for disposal.

In the meantime, place the items in a secure container clearly marked. Next year you can remove them to the proper site.



If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery Center volunteer at 402-734-6817 or 402-731-9869.

National Audubon Society

Membership Application

The *Audubon Magazine* and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name

Street

City State

Zip Code

Introductory Membership

(1st & 2nd Year) - \$20

Renewals: 3rd Year - \$25;

4th Year - \$30 thereafter

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

11809 Old Maple Road

Omaha NE 68164

PO 3

7XCH

Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates your gift and receives.

When sending your gift, please identify the person you wish to memorialize. Please also give the name and address of the person to be notified.

Bequests

A bequest to Audubon is a gift to those who wish to support the Society's work.



Audubon Society of Omaha, 11809 Old Maple Road, Omaha
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Phone: 445-4138

Elected Officers:

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